

GreenCOM Update

A quarterly report from USAID's Environmental Education & Communication Project ♦ April 1999

ME Parties Cooperate on Water-Conservation Video

Mary Sebold

GreenCOM's Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) project on efficient water use recognized World Water Day March 22nd by releasing *Water for Arid Regions*, a half-hour television program for Arab and Israeli youth. The broadcast subtly advocates cooperation throughout the region.



This Jordanian conservation poster reads "I love you, don't lose me!"

Just before World Water Day, the International Distribution Agency (Amman, Jordan) sent finished tapes to stations throughout the Middle East, including Arab states in the Gulf. Meanwhile, J-Net, a Boston-based environmental television production company, prepared to distribute the English-language program via its Ecology Cable Service, which reaches 90 cable systems and 11 million homes throughout the U.S.



Several months before, the Israelis, Jordanians, and Palestinians—key Parties to the Multilateral Working Group on Water Resources (MWGWR) of MEPP—developed local programs to teach children about water in the environment. They completed national video programs on wise water use and printed booklets, posters, bookmarks, and decals to distribute with copies of the telecasts.

Facilitated by USAID/GreenCOM and USIA, the three parties then met in Amman, Jordan, in February 1999 to view each others' programs. J-Net created a broadcast-quality program combining original shots with footage from all three parties. Narration for the videos was provided by teenagers from the featured areas.



Israeli water campaign images: the upper says "tasty?" The lower reads: "You can save water from leaky faucets."

El Salvador: Water Campaign Raises Knowledge, Changes Behavior

In 1998 GreenCOM/El Salvador designed a water campaign for the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources to carry out in 18 municipalities. The campaign aimed to raise public awareness of the importance of using safe water. It spotlighted the causes and consequences of using unsafe water at home, stressed ways to disinfect water, and encouraged citizens to become involved in community groups dedicated to improving access to safe water.

Just before the campaign, GreenCOM conducted a baseline study of residents' knowledge and practices regarding household water usage, using a sample of 2,100 households. A year later, GreenCOM retested another 2,100 households to see how knowledge, attitudes, and behavior may have changed. After a year of the campaign:

- The percentage of adults who could name at least one cause and one consequence of unsafe water rose dramatically, to 91 percent of men and 92 percent of women.



This report uses a tabloid format and cost-minimizing production methods. It is printed on recycled, post-consumer waste paper and was produced entirely in-house at AED using desktop-publishing software and photocopying equipment.

- The proportion of men and women who knew how to disinfect water also rose significantly, to 94 percent for men and 95 percent for women.
- Among those who believed their water was contaminated, only 3 percent chlorinated their water before the campaign; a year later, 53 percent did so.

We assume that these increases result in part from the synergy of the GreenCOM/Ministry of Environment campaign combined with public awareness efforts of the Ministry of Health in the wake of Hurricane Mitch.

The campaign also prompted citizen involvement and local policy work. The number of water user groups organizing local water projects doubled from one year to the next. The number of municipal water regulations issued or under discussion jumped from zero to seventeen.

Egyptian Environment Minister Visits GreenCOM HQ

Peter Spain

Her Excellency Nadia Mokram Ebeid, the Egyptian Minister for the Environment, visited AED on March 5 to learn more about GreenCOM and its proposal for a major project in Egypt.

AED President Stephen Moseley greeted the Minister, who was accompanied by Dina El Naggar, the Ministry's technical coordinator; Ibrahim Abdel Gelil, CEO of the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency; and Mark Silverman, Associate Mission Director of USAID/Cairo.

Brian Day and Jestyn Portugill, proposed Chief of Party for the pending GreenCOM campaign, presented an overview of GreenCOM and the proposed activities.



Egyptian Environment Minister Nadia Mokram Ebeid (left) and AED Senior Vice President May Rihani tour GreenCOM's Resource Center.

GreenCOM has directed three projects on water conservation in Egypt. The current proposal would use environmental education and communication to support policy reform. National media campaigns would focus on specific policy initiatives.



Chongololo Club members greet visitors.

Eco-Clubs Inspire Zambian Communities

Denise Mortimer

Zambia's Chongololo Clubs were launched in the early 1970's as part of a public education effort to increase community acceptance of national parks. Over 25 years later, the clubs are still operating across the country. While based in elementary schools, the clubs aim to increase awareness of conservation issues in the community at large. Many consider them a model environmental education program—a sustainable effort with a community-wide impact.

At the request of the Africa Bureau, GreenCOM consultant Bruce Downie recently completed a report on the Chongololo Clubs to tease out which of the program's features have been key to its success, and how clubs link to communities.

The club leaders, students, and community members Downie interviewed often mentioned environmentally oriented drama, community projects, and hands-on learning as critical to the clubs' success. In addition, the program is widely recognized within the school system. Ongoing training ensures that club leaders remain well informed. Media programs such as environmental radio shows also help boost the popularity of the Chongololo Clubs.

John Harrington

Mali EE Baseline Completed

Reva Schwartz

Last fall GreenCOM/Mali carried out a baseline study of schoolchildren's environmental knowledge and attitudes, so that we can later measure the impact of our teacher's guide. The teacher's guide and accompanying training are designed to help teachers integrate environmental themes into the standard curriculum. GreenCOM presented a preliminary analysis of the baseline to a recent gathering of educators and government staff in Bamako.

We administered the pretest in three regions and three types of schools: community schools, government schools, and PFIE schools—government schools that incorporate the *Programme de Formation et Information Environnementales*, an environmental curriculum funded in elementary schools by the European Union. More than 1,900 girls and boys in grades three through six participated in the pretest.

The study pointed up better environmental knowledge and attitudes among:

- students in community schools compared to students in government schools
- older boys compared to younger boys
- boys compared to girls.

It's not clear yet why community-school students tested higher than PFIE students; this result may have to do with recent teacher-training efforts across the curriculum for community-school instructors. That older boys perform better than younger boys indicates that as age increases, so does schooling and knowledge.

Girls, however, seem to lose ground over time. In some cases, girls start with high levels of knowledge and attitudes but these levels decrease markedly for older girls. Some of the girls may marry early and lose focus on school as their domestic responsibilities increase. In addition, the teachers are nearly all male, and the examples of environmental activities in school curricula tend to feature men and men's work.

We expect that GreenCOM's work will help improve students' knowledge and attitudes, as well as even out differences across schools and genders.

GreenCOM Spurs Green Reporting in Tanzania

In early March, Brian Day and Carole Douglass facilitated a workshop with JET—the Journalists' Environmental Association of Tanzania. The workshop formed part of ongoing education and communication support for USAID/Tanzania's

Natural Resources Management (NRM) Program. JET, 160-members strong, is a partner in GreenCOM/Tanzania; the association had requested technical training to help journalists make their environmental stories more interesting and more thorough.

While no longer entirely government owned, the Tanzanian media have yet to develop a strong tradition of independence and investigation. During the 2 ½ day workshop, the 20 participants studied methods of investigative reporting; designed investigative stories of their choice; practiced techniques for interviewing reticent sources; shared strategies for dealing with bureaucratic barriers to reporting; and walked through how to turn facts into an intriguing story. They analyzed their audiences and thought through stories from the point of view of what would prompt a reader or viewer to act on behalf of the environment.



JET workshop participants design a story. From left: Fred Jim Mdoe, of JET; Upendo Mwinchanga, of the *Daily News*; and Francis Nyange of JET.

Drawing on their backgrounds as media trainers, and Douglass' several years as an investigative reporter, Day and Douglass used role plays, small-group discussions, and even a contest to spark ideas among participants. They also distributed environmental books, including *State of the World '99* and *World Resources Report '99*. At the seminar's close, a senior journalist told the trainers and the USAID representative: "You have given us new tools for an old art."

How Can Communications Promote Sound Environmental Policy?

Paulina Espinosa

We look forward to hearing a variety of answers to this question on August 26th and 27th, at GreenCOM's International Symposium, *Creating Environmentally*

Sound Policy: How Communications Can Make it Happen. The symposium precedes the annual conference of the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) in Cincinnati, Ohio.

More than 3,000 GreenCOM mailing list subscribers received the *Call for Papers*, also made available on the GreenCOM website at <http://www.info.usaid.gov/environment/greencom/Call.pdf>. Close to 75 developing country EE&C professionals responded. The GreenCOM selection committee reviewed each proposal for its relevance to policy, general interest, and replicability. We then sent out some 40 letters of acceptance.

Among the presentations will be *Forests, Health and Hope: Empowering Rural Communities in Eastern Amazonia* and papers on the Public Information and Education Program to Save Philippine Marine Wildlife and the Tanzanian Coastal Management Partnership.

GreenCOM plans to compile a book with lessons learned and the best cases from this symposium, to help other environmental educators and communicators take on the challenges of policy work.

Symposium co-sponsors so far include NAAEE, World Wildlife Fund-US, World Resources Institute, Conservation International, and ISAR—the Initiative for Social Action and Renewal in Eurasia.

We've Moved!

GreenCOM has a new address. Please take a moment to update your records. We can be reached at:

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